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AUTHOR Houle, Cyril O.
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ABSTRACT

This book is the second edition of a work drawn from a series of lectures given by a distinguished scholar and teacher in the field of adult learning at the University of Wisconsin in 1960. The subject of the lectures was adult continuing education--who continues to learn and why. Research was conducted through a series of 2-hour interviews with about 25 residents of the Chicago area. Participants came from varied socioeconomic background, were of various ages, were both men and women, married and single. Some of the findings of the study were the following: (1) more people continue their education from the late 20s until age 50 than at any other time; (2) the higher the formal education of the adult, the more likely it is that he or she will take part in continuing education; (3) learners were usually readily discerned as such by their friends; (4) for the learning oriented, education was an almost constant rather than occasional activity; (5) enrollment in formal education is largely vocational in nature; (6) some learners attend educational classes for the activity itself and the social opportunities the educational setting provides; and (7) influences on learning included family background, teachers and schools, public libraries, occupations, and the examples of friends--but how these influences worked were varied. In an afterword for the second edition of the book, the author summarizes the research of the first part and offers ideas on later trends and research studies, such as self-directed learning and increased participation in higher education by adults. (KC)

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